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Department of Printing online store ships six million items.

OLYMPIA—Online orders through the Department of Printing's Fulfillment storefront, the General Store, surpassed 6 million items on March 25.

The storefront is part of the Fulfillment program at the Department of Printing (PRT), which allows state agencies to print, store and distribute items without the cost of renting and staffing their own warehouse.

The General Store lets anyone with Internet access order publications, videos, CD's and other finished goods from a variety of Washington state agencies 24 hours a day, seven days a week. As a result, the storefront gives agencies in the PRT Fulfillment program all the benefits of an Internet presence without the expense of creating their own online application and staffing an order-processing center.

"The Internet is removing barriers and opening vast new areas of knowledge, communication and information to the public," said program manager Bob Samuelson. "The Department of Printing has used the power of the Internet within state government to make publications quickly and easily available through its General Store."

In early 2000, the first version of the General Store began receiving orders through the Internet, offering just 11 items. By April 2001, the storefront was connected to Department of Printing internal accounting software to allow for automatic creation of packing slips, billing information, inventory tracking and credit card payment processing.

Today, the General Store offers over 500 items from 10 state agencies, many available at no cost to the end user. The storefront receives an average of 1100 orders and ships an average of 400,000 items each month.

The General Store has grown quickly due to its popularity with both users and the agencies that distribute items through the storefront. Samuelson notes, "Customers appreciate the ease and convenience of ordering documents online. Agencies appreciate the inventory control and sales tracking information that allows them to evaluate the effectiveness and need for their publications."

"Great service. I found it very user friendly. Thanks for making my job easier," said Pam Madison of the Senior Services of Island County after placing an order through the General Store recently.

The combination of Fulfillment and the General Store have been so successful in streamlining the distribution of state publications that the Office of Financial Management (OFM) includes the services on their listing of Best Practices. State agencies are encouraged to use these Best Practices to increase efficiency and save taxpayer dollars.

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